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Examining Training Needs of Elementary Paraprofessionals to
Provide Applicable Professional Development

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Abstract

A need exists to provide professional development (PD) to paraprofessionals to ensure they are adequately and appropriately prepared and trained to work with students with disabilities (Individuals with Disabilities Act, 2004). The purpose of this study was to examine the needs for training of elementary paraprofessionals in order to tailor professional development around things that are applicable to their daily job requirements. A survey was sent to paraprofessionals and special education teachers in order to inform the training needs of paraprofessionals. Participants identified that paraprofessionals needed PD around strategies for managing behavior, supervising students, student behavior intervention plans, and supporting student learning. Additionally, when professional development was given around the topics identified, paraprofessionals perceived the training was more applicable to their position. This information may allow schools to find ways to enhance the professional development of paraprofessionals that will be tailored to meet their specific needs. It will also provide school and district leaders with the necessary information to create, plan, and implement future professional development training for paraprofessionals.

Examining Training Needs of Elementary Paraprofessionals to Provide Applicable Professional Development

According to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004), each state needs to ensure they have procedures in place so that necessary personnel are adequately and appropriately prepared and trained to work with students with disabilities (34 C.F.R. § 300.156). This includes paraprofessionals (also referred to as paraeducators). According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS; 2018), in 2018 there were 1,308,800 jobs for paraprofessionals. In that same year, the Occupational Outlook Handbook's Work Environment page stated that 69% of those paraeducators worked in primary and secondary schools (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018). The BLS (2018) projected that the current job outlook will be increasing by four percent over the next ten years, with a projected growth rate of four-tenths of a percent each year. Using this projected growth rate and the United States Department of Education (2017) data available up to the 2016-2017 school year, 431,131 paraprofessionals worked with students with disabilities in primary and secondary schools during the 2017-2018 school year. The BLS (2018) also reported that to become a paraeducator the individual "must have at least a two-year degree, two years of college, or pass a state or local assessment" (np.). The Iowa Department of Education (IA DoE, 2011) has the same requirements and also provides an alternative qualification toward certification. However, the document does not state that the two-year degree or two years of college is required to be related to working with students with disabilities. The fact that schools may hire individuals who have little to no experience to work with students who have the highest needs is problematic.

Using the BLS (2018) projections and the United States Department of Education (2016-2017) data, it could be estimated that 877,699 paraprofessionals are potentially classified as general education paraprofessionals. General education paraprofessionals work with all students and would also benefit from training due to interacting with students who have high needs. Not all students who have high needs are classified as eligible individuals for special education and, as a result, may not have support. Moreover, even students who are classified as eligible individuals for special education may not have the support of a special education paraprofessional, which means that general education paraprofessionals will need to be able to appropriately respond to situations that arise.

Significance of the Study

As a special educator, I felt it fell on my shoulders to train paraprofessionals that I supervised. However, with their hours being similar to those of the students, I found it difficult to provide adequate training during the school day. My sense of responsibility has been shared by other special educators. For instance, Douglas et. al. (2016), found that special education teachers perceived it was their primary responsibility to provide training to paraprofessionals, also called on-the-job training. They also found that there was not enough time to train and meet with them during the school day (Douglas et al., 2016). This supports Downing et. al. 's (2000) findings where paraeducators indicated they felt they had to learn what to do on their own, due to the lack of training when they were hired. Moreover, Breton (2010) found that 25.7% of paraprofessionals received zero to two hours of in-service training in the past twelve months, indicating they were unhappy with the adequacy of on-the-job training they received.

Carter et. al. (2009) recommended that districts use a questionnaire to survey paraprofessionals to identify training needs. By doing this, the chances of PD being well received and used by paraprofessionals would likely increase. Furthermore, Douglas et. al. (2016) called for enhancing the formal methods of training, and increasing the support and time teachers have for day-to-day training. Pertaining to the training curriculum development, Da Fonte and Capizzi (2015) and Parsons and Reid (1999) suggested including a rationale for learning skills, providing a definition of skills, modeling skills for participants with correct and incorrect uses, integrating role-play scenarios (case studies), providing ongoing feedback to participants, and summarizing skills learned. Using information derived from these previous studies, I developed a PD series for teachers at the Madison Elementary School.

Currently, PD for paraeducators in the suburban Iowa school district- of which Madison Elementary is a part - varies among buildings. Data detailing the paraprofessionals' training needs are limited. Therefore, a need exists to provide PD about evidence-based practices for impacting student behavior on a daily basis. The findings from this study will be useful to other districts in and outside of the state of Iowa who are facing similar challenges. This information may allow schools to find ways to enhance the PD of paraprofessionals that will be tailored to meet their specific needs. It will also provide school and district leaders with the necessary information to create, plan, and implement future PD for paraprofessionals.

Definitions

For the purpose of this paper, the following definitions will be used as defined by the IA DoE (2007). *Paraeducator* is “an employee who works under the supervision of teachers or other licensed personnel...whose position is either instructional in nature or who delivers other

direct or indirect services to children, youth, and/or their parents” (Iowa Department of Education, 2007, p. 3). According to the IA DoE, *paraprofessional* is synonymous to *paraeducator*. *Professional development* is defined as “the topical or specific content intended for individuals with special assignments or roles that necessitate specific training” (Iowa Department of Education, 2013, p. 1). For this research, *training* refers specifically to professional development. A *special educator* is a teacher who is licensed or given express permission by the state to teach special education classes and provide special education services to students.

Section 1: A Literature Review on Professional Development for Paraprofessionals

The following literature review focuses on PD for paraprofessionals and includes four sections. The first section addresses the perspectives of special education teachers regarding the training of paraeducators. The second section addresses the perspectives of paraprofessionals regarding their own training. The third section examines the training needs of paraprofessionals. The final section identifies approaches for providing training to paraeducators. This literature review is not an exhaustive review of the professional literature; rather, it provides the general themes.

Perspectives of Special Education Teachers

Douglas et. al. (2016) used a cross-sectional survey design to interview thirteen elementary special education teachers from Pennsylvania who were teaching students with low incidence disabilities (e.g., autism, intellectual disabilities) and who were recognized as distinguished supervisors of paraprofessionals. The purpose of their study was to identify important factors in supervising paraprofessionals. One important factor that emerged was that special education teachers viewed it as their primary responsibility to supervise the paraeducators day-to-day. This included training and providing feedback to paraeducators (Douglas et al., 2016). Teachers listed the following roles for paraeducators: (a) incorporating training and feedback; (b) “providing instructional support to students by documenting student services, providing instructional support, managing behavior, and communicating with team members” (p. 66); and (c) maintaining confidentiality, professionalism, and displaying acceptable interpersonal skills. Another important factor was ensuring appropriate training and evaluation. Paraprofessionals received formal and informal training. When formal training was provided by

the school district, it could vary by the school (primary or secondary setting) and by the population of students that the paraeducator was serving. Informal training, also referred to as on-the-job training, was typically provided by the special education teacher. The third factor that emerged was recommendations for the field. Special education teachers indicated that the lack of training of paraeducators is a concern and that there is not enough time to train and meet with paraprofessionals. In response to these findings, the authors called for systematic training for paraprofessionals, such as providing pre-service training, enhancing the formal methods of in-service training, and increasing the support and time teachers have for day-to-day training.

Perspectives of Paraprofessionals

It is also imperative to consider the perspectives of paraprofessionals to determine what will be applicable to their daily job requirements. Downing et. al. (2000) examined the perspectives of special education paraeducators about their training to meet the roles and responsibilities, and Brenton (2010) examined the perspectives of special education paraeducators on the sufficiency of their pre-service preparation, the sufficiency and efficacy of their supervision, and their identified training needs. Brenton (2010) surveyed 258 special education paraprofessionals while Downing et. al. (2000) interviewed sixteen.

Downing et. al. (2000) found that paraprofessionals reported they were responsible for (a) enacting a wide range of activities they have throughout their day (i.e. providing behavioral supports, monitoring students, adapting/modifying curricula and activities, etc.), (b) interacting and maintaining relationships with team members, and (c) ensuring the quality of service provided to students. Regarding the training of their roles and responsibilities, paraeducators

expressed they felt they had to learn what to do on their own, due to the lack of training when they were hired.

These findings were supported by Brenton (2010) who surveyed paraprofessionals about the number of hours in-service training they received in the past 12 months. Of the 258 respondents, 63.5% ($n = 164$) said they received zero to two hours of training. Twenty-nine percent ($n = 75$) of respondents indicated they were dissatisfied with the adequacy of their on-the-job-training (Brenton, 2010). Brenton (2010) also found that when asked their primary concern, 46.4% ($n = 120$) of respondents said they wanted to be trained on strategies for responding to students who demonstrated behavioral, emotional, and/or social concerns. Further, 63.5% ($n = 164$) of respondents indicated either a major or critical need when asked “what are your training needs in assisting students with behavioral difficulties?” (Breton 2010, p. 42). Nearly half of the paraprofessional respondents (46.3%; $n = 119$) reported that their training to instruct students was fair to very poor. Brenton’s (2010) findings further supported Downing et. al. 's findings (2000) in that paraeducators stated their primary training needs were “related to behavioral interventions, specific disabilities, and the needs of their students related to the effects on their learning” (p. 178). Paraprofessionals also reported they were concerned about their qualifications related to some of their job responsibilities, such as providing direct instruction to introduce new information. It is important to note that the Iowa DoE (2009) declared it is the teacher’s role to provide direct instruction to introduce new information rather than it being the paraeducator’s responsibility (p. 29).

In their studies, Brenton (2010) and Downing et. al. (2000) expressed a need for improved training around behavior and instructional strategies. Brenton (2010) stated

paraeducators were not getting sufficient training or supervision to effectively fulfill their job requirements. One of their recommendations was to make on-going quality training opportunities available to paraprofessionals.

Training Needs

Other scholars examined the training needs of special education paraprofessionals (Carter et. al., 2009; Mann & Whitworth, 2018). Carter et. al. (2009) studied the training needs and opportunities of 313 special education paraeducators working in elementary and secondary schools. Data was collected using a questionnaire. Mann and Whitworth (2018) examined the responsibilities and training needs of paraprofessionals working with secondary students with disabilities at alternative schools by surveying 56 paraprofessionals, teachers, and administrators.

Carter et. al. (2009) found that paraeducators were asked to support students with varying needs across multiple settings within varied instructional formats. They also assumed a wide variety of tasks during a typical school week (i.e. providing one-on-one instruction, implementing behavior management programs, providing instructional support in a small group, etc.). Among these paraprofessionals, on-the-job training was their primary training. This is similar to Mann and Whitworth (2018) who, based on the results of their survey, recommended the PD of paraprofessionals: (a) provide training on the curriculum and instructional strategies to increase effectiveness and confidence when instructing students, (b) provide PD on ethical responsibilities, and (c) provide modeling of supervision in academic settings and on the implementation of behavior intervention plans (BIP) in student's individualized education plans (IEP). "Therefore, it is critical that paraprofessionals receive opportunities to learn effective

strategies for providing academic, social, and behavioral support to students with disabilities” (Carter et al., 2009, p. 355).

Training Approaches

Da Fonte and Capizzi (2015) implemented a module-based approach to train paraeducators in evidence-based practices. Each module was given at the beginning of each week and used an explicit instructional model via PowerPoint which included (a) a case study; (b) definition of the evidence-based practice with examples and non-examples; (c) modeling of the practice; (d) guided practice with feedback; (e) independent practice with feedback; and (f) a summary of the practice. Overall, participants improved their use of evidence-based behavioral strategies. The module-based approach offers an effective, “unique and cost-effective way to train paraeducators in core instructional strategies” (p. 47).

Parsons and Reid (1999) developed the Training Basic Teaching Skills (TBTS) to train paraprofessionals on task analysis, least-to-most assistive prompting, reinforcement, and error correction. This training was developed to train paraprofessionals who work with students with significant disabilities in one, eight-hour day. The training consisted of classroom-based instruction, on-the-job monitoring and feedback, and follow-up supervision. The goal of the TBTS was to train participants to be 80% proficient in learned skills. The classroom-based training of TBTS included the following components: (a) the rationale for learning the skills being taught; (b) modeling each skill taught by providing instruction on correct and incorrect uses of each skill; (c) practicing each skill with another participant in a role-play situation; and (d) having the instructor provide feedback to the participant regarding the accuracy of implementation of the skill. On-the-job monitoring involved the instructor going into the

classroom to observe a paraeducator's teaching. The instructor then provided feedback to the paraeducator regarding the use of the skills they learned. The follow-up supervision involved continued scheduled observations of teaching and providing feedback to ensure that paraprofessionals maintained 80% proficiency. Paraeducators responded positively to the training procedures (Parsons & Reid, 1999).

When training paraeducators, teachers viewed it as their primary responsibility to supervise the paraeducators day-to-day, including training and providing feedback (Douglas et al. 2016). However, on-the-job training was reported as being the primary training of paraprofessionals (Carter et al., 2009). When asked about the adequacy of their on-the-job-training, 29% of paraprofessionals indicated they were dissatisfied with the statement (Breton, 2010). Moreover, paraeducators have a wide variety of responsibilities they do every day including providing one-on-one instruction, implementing behavior management programs, providing instructional support in a small group (Carter et al., 2009). This supports Mann and Whitworth's (2018) recommendations that PD of paraprofessionals provide training on curriculum, instructional strategies, and ethical responsibilities, and training should include modeling of implementation of BIPs in student's IEPs and supervision in academic settings. However, with Douglas et al.'s (2016) call for systematic training for paraprofessionals, it can be argued that more training should be provided formally for paraeducators, rather than it being viewed as the special educator's responsibility.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to examine the training needs of elementary paraprofessionals and to tailor professional development (PD) around topics that are applicable

to their daily job requirements. To guide this study, four research questions were developed:

(1) What are elementary special education teachers' perspectives on the training needs of paraprofessionals? (2) What are elementary paraeducators' perspectives of need for their own training? (3) Is the current paraprofessional training perceived as applicable to their daily job requirements? (4) If not, how can PD be tailored to meet their needs?

Section 2: Methodology

The purpose of this study was to examine the needs for training of elementary paraprofessionals to tailor their PD and to better meet their daily job requirements at one elementary school in suburban Iowa. The district gave approval for the study to be conducted.

The design used for this study was a cross-sectional survey design, as used in Brenton (2010), Carter et. al. (2009), and Mann and Whitworth (2018). Creswell and Guetterman (2019) described this as a cross-sectional research design. This type of design “collects data at one point in time,” and is utilized in order to “examine current attitudes, beliefs, opinions, or practices” (p. 386). Surveys were emailed to participants using Qualtrics. A response rate of 50% or better is considered adequate (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Each survey was emailed once to the selected participants.

Survey Participants

Participants of the survey included elementary special education teachers and elementary paraprofessionals from a suburban Iowa school district. Nineteen elementary special education teachers and 86 elementary paraprofessionals were selected using the district’s website. Participants were contacted via their school email address with links to the survey that recorded the responses anonymously. Only the individuals that completed all of the questions on their surveys were included in this study. Of the individuals contacted, eight special education teachers and 15 elementary paraprofessionals met the requirements.

Surveys

The survey developed for elementary paraprofessionals to communicate their training needs consisted of 25 questions. The focus of the survey was on their perspectives regarding current

training, applicability of training to their current role, applicability of previous training, initial training needs, and future training needs. Questions consisted of five open-ended questions, 17 Likert-type rating questions, and two demographic questions. See Table 1 for the questions and answers included in the survey. Another survey was developed for elementary special education teachers to communicate the training needs of their paraprofessionals which consisted of 22 questions. The focus of this survey was on their perspectives regarding the current training of paraprofessionals, the applicability of the training to the paraprofessionals' current role, the applicability of paraeducators previous training, and future training needs. Questions consisted of one open-ended question, 19 rating scale-like questions, and two demographic questions. See Table 2 for the questions and answers included in the survey. Both surveys were distributed via Qualtrics in the Spring of 2019.

Professional Development

The PD for paraprofessionals was conducted at Madison Elementary for the paraprofessionals that worked in that building. All paraeducators were invited to attend. The training consisted of four sessions throughout the 2019-2020 school year. Each session lasted between an hour and a half and two hours. These training sessions were part of the job responsibilities and therefore mandatory. The sessions were held on October 10, 2019, October 23, 2019, December 18, 2019, and January 20, 2020. Paraeducators received training around their job responsibilities, lunch expectations, building expectations, scheduling, and behavior management strategies. See Appendices A, B, C, D, and E, for the PowerPoint presentations used during each session. The results of the surveys given in the Spring of 2019 were analyzed before the first training and the social validity questions informed the content for the remaining

PD sessions. Training sessions were conducted by the behavior interventionist and author, other special education teachers and the author, or just the author.

The Iowa Professional Development Model (2009) was used when teaching paraprofessional new skills. According to the IA DoE, the following elements should be used in order for skills to be learned and implemented with students. The first element that should be used is information and theory so that rationale for the strategy is introduced and explanation for the strategy given (p. 44). The next element is demonstration which consists of modeling with examples and non-examples so that paraeducators are able to see and understand how the strategies are used. After demonstration, the paraeducator practices the skill in a setting that is controlled with immediate feedback. The last step is coaching and collaboration during this time the paraeducators were able to ask questions (p. 45).

Social Validity Survey

Social Validity surveys were anonymously completed by paraprofessionals who participated in the study and were distributed via paper at the end of each PD session. The focus of the survey was on paraeducators' perspectives regarding the applicability of training to their current role, if they would like more training in the future, and future training needs. Thirteen paraprofessionals completed the survey for the first PD session, 11 for the second session, 15 for the third session, and 17 for the fourth session. See Table 3 for questions and answers for each survey.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed by using frequency percentages, meaning the number of times each question was answered was divided by the number of participants who completed all the

questions on each survey. This method was used in order to compare data across survey responses and inform future training.

Based upon the initial survey, session one training content was determined. From there, the social validity survey from session one informed the content for session two, session two social validity survey informed the content session three, and the social validity survey from session three informed the content for session four.

Section 3: Results

Paraprofessional Perspectives of Training Needs Survey

The survey sent to paraeducators was designed to answer the following questions: (1) What are elementary paraeducators' perspectives of need for their own training? (2) Is the current paraprofessional training perceived as applicable to their daily job requirements? (3) If not, how can PD be tailored to meet their needs? The results described below are in Table 1.

There are five elementary schools in the suburban Iowa school district. Nearly three-quarters of the paraprofessionals who responded were from Madison and Eisenhower Elementary Schools. Of the total paraeducators who responded, 80% indicated they were a special education paraprofessional who supported students who have academic and behavior goals. Of these, one-third indicated they supported students who primarily had behavior goals. Respondents also indicated that they support students in the general education setting (33.3%) slightly more than in the special education setting (26.7%).

From the perspective of the paraprofessionals who responded to the survey, two-thirds indicated that their training was primarily informal and provided by the special educator; and one-third indicated that their training was primarily formal and provided by the school district or building in which they worked. When asked who primarily provided training for paraprofessionals, a little over one half indicated the special educator, a third indicated their building, and a little over one-tenth indicated the school district.

Paraprofessionals indicated that they received more directly applicable training from their supervising special education teacher (46.7%) than when the PD was provided by their building (20%) or the school district (33.3%). These findings were further supported by paraprofessionals

Table 1

Results of the survey that paraprofessionals took in order to communicate their training needs.

Results of Paraprofessional Perspectives of Training Needs	Percent
Work Place	
Please select the elementary school in which you work.	
● Eisenhower	33.3%
● Ford	13.3%
● Madison	40.0%
● Monroe	6.7%
● Sherman	6.7%
Select all choices that best describes your role as a paraprofessional.	
● Special Education Paraprofessional - Supporting students who primarily have academic goals	6.7%
● Special Education Paraprofessional- Supporting students who primarily have behavior goals	33.3%
● Special Education Paraprofessional- Supporting students who have academic and behavior goals	80.0%
● General Education Paraprofessional	6.7%
● Supporting students in the general education setting	33.3%
● Supporting students in the special education setting	26.7%

Training of Paraprofessionals

From your perspective, training of paraprofessionals is primarily:

- Formal-provided by the school district/building 33.3%
- Informal-provided by the special educator 66.7%

From your perspective, training for paraprofessionals is primarily provided by:

- The special educator 53.3%
- The district 13.3%
- Your building 33.3%

How applicable do you think informal training is for your position?

- Directly Applicable 53.3%
- Somewhat Applicable 40.0%
- Slightly Applicable 6.7%
- Not Applicable 0.0%

How applicable do you think formal training provided by the district or your building is for your position?

- Directly Applicable 26.7%
- Somewhat Applicable 60.0%
- Slightly Applicable 6.7%
- Not Applicable 6.7%

How applicable do you think formal training provided by your special education teacher is for your position?

- Directly Applicable 46.7%
- Somewhat Applicable 13.3%
- Slightly Applicable 6.7%
- Not Applicable 13.3%
- I am not supervised by a special education teacher 20.0%

Training Provided by the Special Education Teacher

Which choice best describes how often you, as a paraprofessional, receive training from your special education teacher?

- Daily 6.7%
- Weekly 13.3%
- Monthly 13.3%
- 3-5 times per year 26.7%
- 1-2 times per year 6.7%
- Never 13.3%
- I am not supervised by a special education teacher 20.0%

In general, how often do you apply the strategies/information you receive from the special education teacher that supervises you?

- Daily 53.3%
- Weekly 13.3%
- Monthly 0.0%
- Rarely 6.7%
- Never 6.7%
- I am not supervised by a special education teacher 20.0%

How applicable is the training provided by the special education teacher that supervises you?

- Directly Applicable 46.7%
- Somewhat Applicable 13.3%
- Slightly Applicable 6.7%
- Not Applicable 13.3%
- I am not supervised by a special education teacher 20.0%

Would you describe the trainings provided by the special education teacher to be directly applicable to your daily needs?

- Yes 40.0%
- Somewhat 13.3%
- No 26.7%
- I am not supervised by a special education teacher 20.0%

What information provided by the special education teacher do you think is the most applicable?

- | | |
|---|-------|
| • Strategies for managing behaviors | 26.7% |
| • Not applicable | 26.7% |
| • Strategies for helping students learn | 20.0% |
| • Training around schedules | 13.3% |
| • No training provided | 13.3% |
| • Modeling strategies | 6.7% |
| • Student expectations | 6.7% |
| • Situation specific training | 6.7% |
| • Student specific training | 6.7% |
| • Prompting students | 6.7% |

Training Provided by your Building

Which choice best describes how often your building provides trainings for you to attend?

- | | |
|----------------------|-------|
| ● Daily | 0.0% |
| ● Weekly | 6.7% |
| ● Monthly | 13.3% |
| ● 3-5 times per year | 53.3% |
| ● 1-2 times per year | 26.7% |
| ● Never | 0.0% |

How applicable do you think the trainings provided by your building is to you?

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------|
| ● Directly Applicable | 20.0% |
| ● Somewhat Applicable | 46.7% |
| ● Slightly Applicable | 33.3% |
| ● Not Applicable | 0.0% |

In general, often do you apply the strategies/information you receive from your building?

- | | |
|-----------|-------|
| ● Daily | 20.0% |
| ● Weekly | 40.0% |
| ● Monthly | 6.7% |
| ● Rarely | 33.3% |
| ● Never | 0.0% |

Would you describe the trainings provided by your building to be directly applicable to your needs?

- | | |
|------------|-------|
| ● Yes | 26.7% |
| ● Somewhat | 60.0% |
| ● No | 13.3% |

Which trainings provided by your building do you think are the most applicable?

- | | |
|--|-------|
| ● Strategies for managing behaviors | 40.0% |
| ● Professional development for paraprofessionals | 13.3% |
| ● Nonviolent crisis intervention training | 13.3% |
| ● Autism training | 6.7% |
| ● ALICE training | 6.7% |
| ● Lunch dismissal routine | 6.7% |
| ● Payroll changes | 6.7% |
| ● Building relationships with students | 6.7% |
| ● None | 6.7% |
| ● Not applicable | 6.7% |

Training Led by the District

Which choice best describes how often the district provides training to you?

- | | |
|----------------------|-------|
| ● Daily | 0.0% |
| ● Weekly | 6.7% |
| ● Monthly | 0.0% |
| ● 3-5 times per year | 26.7% |
| ● 1-2 times per year | 60.0% |
| ● Never | 6.7% |

In general, often do you apply the strategies/information you receive from the district?

- | | |
|-----------|-------|
| ● Daily | 20.0% |
| ● Weekly | 33.3% |
| ● Monthly | 20.0% |
| ● Rarely | 20.0% |
| ● Never | 6.7% |

How applicable do you think the training provided to you by the district is for you?

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------|
| ● Directly Applicable | 33.3% |
| ● Somewhat Applicable | 40.0% |
| ● Slightly Applicable | 20.0% |
| ● Not Applicable | 6.7% |

Would you describe the trainings provided by the district to be directly applicable to your needs?

- | | |
|------------|-------|
| ● Yes | 46.7% |
| ● Somewhat | 46.7% |
| ● No | 6.7% |

Which trainings provided by the district do you think are the most applicable?

- | | |
|--|-------|
| ● Nonviolent crisis intervention training | 40.0% |
| ● Strategies for managing behaviors | 20.0% |
| ● Clay Cook/Guest speakers | 13.3% |
| ● ALICE training | 6.7% |
| ● Autism training | 6.7% |
| ● Responsive Classroom | 6.7% |
| ● Zero Error | 6.7% |
| ● Not sure if training is provided by the school or district | 6.7% |
| ● None | 6.7% |
| ● Not applicable | 6.7% |

Other

What do you think paraprofessionals should receive training around?

- | | |
|---|-------|
| ● Strategies for supporting student learning | 60.0% |
| ● Strategies for supporting student behavior | 53.3% |
| ● Strategies in Behavior Intervention Plans | 33.3% |
| ● Strategies for supervising students | 26.7% |
| ● Building relationships | 13.3% |
| ● Autism specific training | 6.7% |
| ● Depends on what classroom they are working in | 6.7% |

What information do you wish you would have known/learned when you first began your job?

- | | |
|---|-------|
| ● Training on managing student behavior | 53.3% |
| ● Training on academic strategies | 13.3% |
| ● Job responsibilities | 13.3% |
| ● Training on schedules | 13.3% |
| ● Student learning expectations | 6.7% |
| ● Training on Behavior Intervention Plans | 6.7% |
| ● Rules and policies training | 6.7% |
| ● Not sure | 6.7% |
| ● Nonviolent crisis intervention training | 6.7% |
| ● Autism training | 6.7% |
| ● Meeting between paraprofessionals, teachers, and administrators | 6.7% |
| ● A lot | 6.7% |
| ● Lunch and recess expectations | 6.7% |

Note: ALICE- Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, and Evacuate; When calculating the total of percentages in questions may be above 100.0% due to rounding to the nearest hundredth or because open-ended questions allow participants to write as many answers as they want. The percent refers to the percent of participants that selected the response.

perspectives of how often they applied strategies or information received from training.

Paraeducators reported they applied the strategies or information received from their supervising special educators (53.3%) daily when compared to the training provided by their building (20%) or the school district (20%).

Overall, paraeducators perceived the training that was the most applicable to them included behavior management strategies, Nonviolent Crisis Intervention (NCI) training, strategies for helping students learn, training around schedules, and PD from guest speakers. Paraprofessionals indicated they needed more training around the following topics: strategies for supporting student learning (60%), strategies for supporting student behavior (53.3%), strategies for BIPs (33.3%), strategies for supervising students (26.7%), building relationships (13.3%), and Autism-specific training (6.7%).

Special Educators' Perspectives of Paraprofessional Training Needs Survey

This survey, which differed from the paraprofessional training, was sent to special education teachers and was designed to answer the following questions: (1) What are elementary special education teachers' perspectives on training needs of paraprofessionals? (2) Is the current paraprofessional training perceived as applicable to their daily job requirements? (3) If not, how can PD be tailored to meet their needs? The results described below are in Table 2.

The special education teachers who responded to the survey were from Ford (12.5%), Madison (37.5%), Monroe (12.5%), and Sherman (12.5%). When asked to describe how many paraprofessionals they supervise, they responded one (25%), three (37.5%), four (12.5%), five (12.5%), and more than five (12.5%).

Results of the survey that Special Educators took in order to communicate the training needs of paraprofessionals.

Results of Special Education Teachers Perspectives for Paraprofessional Training Needs	Percent
Work Place	
Please select the elementary school in which you work.	
● Eisenhower	0.0%
● Ford	12.5%
● Madison	37.5%
● Monroe	12.5%
● Sherman	12.5%
Which answer best describes how many paraprofessionals you supervise?	
● 0	0.0%
● 1	25.0%
● 2	0.0%
● 3	37.5%
● 4	12.5%
● 5	12.5%
● More than 5	12.5%

Training of paraprofessionals

Training of paraprofessionals is primarily:

- Formal-provided by the school district/building 0.0%
- Informal-provided by the special educator 100.0%

Training for paraprofessionals is primarily provided by:

- The special educator 100.0%
- The district 0.0%
- Your building 0.0%

How applicable do you think informal training is for paraprofessionals you work with/supervise?

- Very Applicable 75.0%
- Somewhat Applicable 25.0%
- Slightly Applicable 0.0%
- Not Applicable 0.0%

How applicable do you think formal training provided by the district or your building is for the paraprofessionals you work with/supervise?

- Very Applicable 50.0%
- Somewhat Applicable 37.5%
- Slightly Applicable 12.5%
- Not Applicable 0.0%

How applicable do you think formal training provided by you is for the paraprofessionals you work with/supervise?

- Very Applicable 50.0%
- Somewhat Applicable 50.0%
- Slightly Applicable 0.0%
- Not Applicable 0.0%

Special educator-provided training

Which choice best describes how often you, as the special educator, provide training to paraprofessionals?

- | | |
|----------------------|-------|
| ● Daily | 87.5% |
| ● Weekly | 12.5% |
| ● Monthly | 0.0% |
| ● 3-5 times per year | 0.0% |
| ● 1-2 times per year | 0.0% |
| ● Never | 0.0% |

In general, often do paraprofessionals apply the strategies/information they receive from you?

- | | |
|-----------|-------|
| ● Daily | 87.5% |
| ● Weekly | 12.5% |
| ● Monthly | 0.0% |
| ● Rarely | 0.0% |
| ● Never | 0.0% |

How important is providing training to the paraprofessionals with which you work with/supervise?

- | | |
|----------------------|--------|
| ● Very Important | 100.0% |
| ● Somewhat Important | 0.0% |
| ● Slightly Important | 0.0% |
| ● Not Important | 0.0% |

Would you describe the trainings provided by you to be directly applicable to the needs of your paraprofessionals?

- | | |
|------------|-------|
| ● Yes | 87.5% |
| ● Somewhat | 12.5% |
| ● No | 0.0% |

How manageable is your ability to provide training that is directly applicable to the needs of paraprofessionals you supervise/work with?

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------|
| ● Extremely manageable | 0.0% |
| ● Somewhat manageable | 37.5% |
| ● Slightly manageable | 12.5% |
| ● Neither manageable or unmanageable | 0.0% |
| ● Slightly unmanageable | 12.5% |
| ● Somewhat unmanageable | 12.5% |
| ● Extremely unmanageable | 25.0% |

Formal trainings provided by the building

Which choice best describes how often your building provides training for paraprofessionals?

- | | |
|----------------------|-------|
| ● Daily | 0.0% |
| ● Weekly | 0.0% |
| ● Monthly | 12.5% |
| ● 3-5 times per year | 37.5% |
| ● 1-2 times per year | 50.0% |
| ● Never | 0.0% |

How applicable do you think training provided by your buildings for paraprofessionals?

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------|
| ● Very Applicable | 50.0% |
| ● Somewhat Applicable | 37.5% |
| ● Slightly Applicable | 12.5% |
| ● Not Applicable | 0.0% |

In general, often do paraprofessionals apply the strategies/information they receive from your building?

- | | |
|-----------|-------|
| ● Daily | 37.5% |
| ● Weekly | 25.0% |
| ● Monthly | 12.5% |
| ● Rarely | 25.0% |
| ● Never | 0.0% |

Would you describe the trainings provided by your building to be directly applicable to the needs of your paraprofessionals?

- | | |
|------------|-------|
| ● Yes | 50.0% |
| ● Somewhat | 37.5% |
| ● No | 12.5% |

District-led trainings for paraprofessionals

Which choice best describes how often the district provides training for paraprofessionals?

- | | |
|----------------------|-------|
| • Daily | 0.0% |
| • Weekly | 0.0% |
| • Monthly | 0.0% |
| • 3-5 times per year | 12.5% |
| • 1-2 times per year | 75.0% |
| • Never | 12.5% |

In general, often do paraprofessionals apply the strategies/information they receive from the district?

- | | |
|-----------|-------|
| • Daily | 50.0% |
| • Weekly | 37.5% |
| • Monthly | 0.0% |
| • Rarely | 12.5% |
| • Never | 0.0% |

How applicable do you think training provided by the district is for paraprofessionals?

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------|
| • Very Applicable | 37.5% |
| • Somewhat Applicable | 50.0% |
| • Slightly Applicable | 12.5% |
| • Not Applicable | 0.0% |

Would you describe the trainings provided by the district to be directly applicable to the needs of your paraprofessionals?

- | | |
|------------|-------|
| • Yes | 75.0% |
| • Somewhat | 25.0% |
| • No | 0.0% |

Other

What do you think paraprofessionals should receive training around?

- | | |
|---|-------|
| ● Training on Behavior Intervention Plan strategies | 62.5% |
| ● Strategies for behavior management | 50.0% |
| ● Strategies when supervising students | 37.5% |
| ● Strategies for supporting student learning | 25.0% |
| ● Training on instructional strategies | 12.5% |
| ● Ways to communicate with students | 12.5% |

Note: When calculating the total of percentages in questions may be above 100.0% due to rounding to the nearest hundredth or

because open-ended questions allow participants to write as many answers as they want. The percent refers to the percent of

participants that selected the response.

From the perspective of special educators, all of them indicated it was very important to provide training to paraprofessionals with whom they work or supervise. All of the special education teachers also indicated that the training of paraprofessionals was primarily informal and provided by the special educator. Moreover, 87.5% special education teachers indicated that they provided more directly applicable training to paraprofessionals than when PD was provided by their building (50%) or the school district (75%). Additionally, 87.5% of special education teachers reported that paraeducators applied the strategies or information received from them daily when compared to the training provided by the paraprofessionals building (37.5%) or the school district (50%). Furthermore, special education teachers were divided on how manageable it was for them to provide training that was directly applicable to the needs of the paraprofessionals they supervised. Special educators reported that paraprofessionals needed training on BIP strategies (62.5%), strategies for behavior management (50%), strategies when supervising students (37.5%), strategies for supporting student learning (25%), training on instructional strategies (12.5%), and ways to communicate with students (12.5%).

Social Validity Survey

A social validity survey was given to paraeducators at the end of each PD session. The purpose of this survey was to determine how applicable the training they just received was to their position, if they would like more training like it in the future, and to aid in determining topics in order to tailor PD to meet their needs. The results described below are in Table 3.

The social validity surveys were completed at the end of each PD session which were held on October 10, 2019, October 23, 2019, December 18, 2019, and January 20, 2020. Twenty paraprofessionals attended each training. Thirteen paraprofessionals completed the survey for the

Results of the Social Validity Survey for the Paraprofessional Professional Development Sessions.

Results of the Social Validity Survey for the Paraprofessional Professional Development Sessions	PD 1 Percent	PD 2 Percent	PD 3 Percent	PD 4 Percent
How applicable was this training to your position?				
• Directly Applicable	61.5%	73.7%	93.3%	82.4%
• Somewhat Applicable	23.1%	27.3%	6.7%	17.6%
• Slightly Applicable	15.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
• Not Applicable	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
How often will you apply the strategies you have learned in this training?				
• Daily	92.3%	81.8%	86.7%	100.0%
• Weekly	0.0%	18.2%	13.3%	0.0%
• Monthly	7.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
• Rarely	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
• Never	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Would you like more trainings like this?				
• Yes	100.0%	81.8%	93.3%	94.1%
• No	0.0%	18.2%	6.7%	5.9%
Questions I still have or things I would like to know more about:				
• Behavior management strategies	76.9%	63.6%	66.7%	58.8%
• Duty specific training	7.7%	18.2%	33.3%	11.8%
• Nonviolent crisis intervention	30.8%	27.3%	33.3%	47.1%
• ALICE	15.4%	27.3%	33.3%	47.1%
• Computer Proficiency	7.7%	18.2%	20.0%	29.4%
• Other(s)-Please specify	15.4%	0.0%	13.3%	0.0%

Note: PD- Professional Development; ALICE- Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, and Evacuate; When calculating the total of

percentages in questions may be above or below 100.0% due to rounding to the nearest hundredth or because participants were able to select multiple options when answering the question. The percent refers to the percent of participants that selected the response.

first PD session, 11 for the second session, 15 for the third session, and 17 for the fourth session. A majority of the paraeducators indicated that they would like more PD sessions like the one they had just attended with percentages ranging from 81.8% to 100%. When asked how applicable the training was to their position, 61.5% from the first training indicated it was directly applicable, followed by 73.7% from the second training, 93.3% from the third training, and 82.4% from the fourth training. Paraprofessionals indicated they would apply the strategies on a daily basis 92.3% of the time from the first session, 81.8% from the second session, 86.7% from the third session, and 100% from the fourth session. Lastly, when looking at data across all PD sessions, paraeducators indicated they would like to know more about behavior management strategies, NCI training, and ALICE training.

In this study, the results of the paraeducator and the special educators' surveys from the Spring of 2019 were similar and determined the content for the first PD session, including job responsibilities, lunch expectations, building expectations, scheduling, and questions and concerns (see Appendix A). Based on the discussion during the questions and concerns portion, additional topics covered during the training were behavior management and effective communication between teachers and paraeducators. Based on the results from the survey from the first training, I provided an in-depth look at the roles and responsibilities of general education teachers, special education teachers, and paraprofessionals (see Appendices B and C). These topics were chosen because of the amount of turnover of paraprofessionals between the first training and the second training. Based on the results from the second social validity survey, the topics covered in the third session were behavior management strategies, specifically behavior momentum, behavior specific praise, and wait time (see Appendix D). The behavior

management strategies were chosen based on the frequency that they appeared in student BIPs.

Based on the results from the third social validity survey, the final training covered more behavior management strategies so the topics, including planned ignoring and precision commands (see Appendix E). These strategies were chosen based on the frequency they appeared in student BIPs.

Section 4: Discussion

The purpose of this study was twofold: to examine the training needs of elementary paraprofessionals and to tailor PD around topics that are applicable to their daily job requirements. To examine the training needs of elementary paraprofessionals, two tasks were developed. The first was a survey sent to elementary paraprofessionals, which was recommended by Carter et. al. (2009) to identify training needs of paraeducators. The second was a survey sent to elementary special education teachers.

When examining the training needs of paraprofessionals, it is important to consider the perspectives of paraeducators and special educators in relation to how training has been conducted in the past. In this study, paraprofessionals and special education teachers perceived that training was primarily informal and provided by the special education teacher. This was consistent with Douglas et. al's. (2016) findings where the special education teacher typically provided informal training. Special educators were divided about how manageable providing applicable training was. The majority of paraprofessionals and special educators indicated that informal training was the most applicable to their position and more than half reported they applied the strategies or information daily. However, paraeducators did not find the informal training as applicable than the special educators. Furthermore, both sets of respondents reported that formal paraprofessional PD needed to be more applicable to paraeducators' daily job requirements, including strategies for managing behavior, supervising students, student BIPs, and supporting student learning. This is consistent with previous research that indicated formal training methods needed to be enhanced (Douglas et. al., 2016) and that paraeducators identified

improved training around behavior and instructional strategies were needed (Brenton, 2010; Downing et al., 2000).

Based on the initial surveys, respondents indicated that on-the-job-training provided by special educators was the most applicable to paraeducators daily job requirements, it is necessary to identify what the reason for this was in order to tailor PD around relevant topics. It is feasible to surmise that informal training provided by the special education teacher was perceived to be the most applicable to paraeducators daily job requirements because special educators are able to observe paraprofessionals and discuss training needs with them. Thus, the special education teacher has more knowledge about what will be the most applicable to paraeducators on a daily basis. To enhance PD for paraprofessionals, individuals who organize formal training need to observe and talk to paraprofessionals to plan applicable PD. It may not be practical to observe and talk to paraprofessionals, so surveys can be sent to both paraeducators and special educators in order to tailor PD to meet paraprofessionals' needs.

The first two PD sessions had more recently hired paraprofessionals which resulted in discussions around expectations. While data from the social validity surveys from PD session one and session two indicated that paraeducators perceived the information as applicable, if school districts had other methods of conveying that information, then more time could be spent on providing other applicable material.

The results of the social validity survey indicated the PD was effective and valuable. The participants reported a high level of applicability to their current position (62 - 93%) and they expected to apply strategies on a daily basis (82 - 100%). The training provided in this study could be considered building level, thus when comparing the results from the paraprofessional

survey from the Spring of 2019 and the social validity survey, paraeducators perceived that it was 73.3% more applicable and they would apply the strategies and information 80% more often. This supports Cater et. al.'s (2009) assertion that by using a questionnaire to survey paraprofessionals to identify training needs, chances of PD being well received and used by paraprofessionals would likely increase and in the case of this study, it increased significantly.

Limitations

While the results of the study indicated favorable outcomes, limitations should be noted. One limitation to the study was collecting data via an online survey. This could have affected validity due to participants misunderstanding questions which could have led them to answering questions incorrectly. A second limitation around collecting data via online is that the response rate for the Spring of 2019 survey was relatively low for paraprofessionals at 17.4%. No follow-up procedures were used.

Another limitation was scheduling and attendance. The facilitator(s) of the PD sessions had to attend mandatory PD of their own which, at times, made it difficult to schedule PD sessions and resulted in short notice of when the paraprofessional training would be. Due to this, there were times when paraprofessionals had other obligations they were unable to reschedule. One more limitation of the study was the number of paraprofessionals who left their job and were replaced during the study.

A final limitation may be related to the fact that the author was employed by the school district as a special education teacher during this study. The participants could have felt pressured to respond to the surveys and to participate in the training sessions study for that

reason. If participants felt pressured into participating in the survey, their answers may not be truthful and as a result could have skewed the data.

Future Research

While results from the study are promising, future research around the PD of paraprofessionals should be applied to larger groups of paraprofessionals across school districts. Additionally, more attention should be given to the coaching portion of the professional development model provided by the IA DoE (2009). The fact that paraprofessionals indicated they would implement the strategies daily suggests that investigation is also needed as to whether or not the strategies were applied with fidelity. Expansion of this study to include the impact of paraprofessional training on student data could increase knowledge around the effectiveness of the PD sessions. The fact that there was a large amount of turnover of paraprofessionals during the study, future research around training and the impact on paraeducator job retention would be beneficial. Lastly, this study was four sessions, future research should consider PD for a longer period of time (e.g. semester, school year, etc.).

Practical Implications for School Districts

To examine the training needs of elementary paraprofessionals so that PD can be tailored around topics applicable to their daily job requirements, PD facilitators, should observe paraprofessionals and have face-to-face conversations with paraprofessionals and special education teachers. Direct observation and face-to-face conversations can facilitate their understanding of questions so that they are able to answer questions more accurately, thus, resulting in more applicable PD.

However, if surveys must be administered, paper surveys typically yield a higher response rate than online surveys (Nulty, 2008). Still, if online surveys are determined to be the best approach, a follow-up procedure must be utilized. A follow-up strategy outlined in Cresswell and Guetterman (2019) is to use a three-phased approach such as first sending an invitation with a link to the survey, then two weeks later send a follow-up email to non-responders, and lastly send one last email to the after another two weeks to remind individuals who have not completed the survey (p. 400). Furthermore, to avoid scheduling and attendance issues, the school district should set aside dates and times for paraprofessional PD. By providing paraeducators with ample notice, this will hopefully decrease them having other obligations and increase attendance. Paraprofessional PD should also be expanded to include paraeducators in secondary settings.

The first two PD sessions had more recently hired paraprofessionals which resulted in discussions around expectations. School districts or buildings should have an initial training at the beginning of the year for all paraprofessionals to address expectations. An online training should also be developed for any new hires who begin after the initial training so that PD during the school year will address other applicable material. Furthermore, new staff should be given time to complete the training during their first day of work or be reimbursed for completing the training outside of their working hours.

Overall, the findings from this study can provide valuable information to school buildings, teams, and districts. This information may allow schools to find ways to enhance PD of paraprofessionals that will be applicable to their needs. It can also provide school and district

leaders with the necessary information to create, plan, and implement future PDs for paraprofessionals.

Conclusion

This study examined the needs for training elementary paraprofessionals so that their PD can be tailored to better meet their daily job requirements. Results indicated that paraprofessionals and special educators found informal training to be more applicable than formal training. Furthermore, these individuals identified that paraprofessionals needed PD around strategies for managing behavior, supervising students, student BIPs, and supporting student learning. Moreover, paraprofessionals perceived that the training they received during the PD sessions was more applicable to their position and overall they would apply the strategies and information learned more frequently. Future research should be applied to larger groups of paraprofessionals across school districts and endeavor to continue to tailor PD to meet their needs.

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Appendices

Appendix A



Agenda

- Ice Breaker (5 minutes)
- Principal (5 minutes)
- Norms (5 minutes)
- Questions & Concerns (30 minutes)
- General Building Expectations (15 minutes)
- Lunch Expectations-How can we make it better? (10 minutes)
- Walkie-Talkies (5 minutes)
- Point Sheets (10 minutes)
- Exit Slip (5 minutes)



Ice Breaker



Principal

Important Announcements



Norms

- Team based decision making
- Focus on student equity and access
- Remain thoughtfully engaged
- Allow for individual participation, focusing on the same end goal
- Start and end times are observed and respected
- Active listening for the sole purpose to understand



Questions & Concerns

- Turn and Talk
 - Problems
 - Solutions
- Group Talk
 - Present problems and solutions
- Review



General Building Expectations

- Phones
- Confidentiality
- PBIS
- 5-1
- Changes to EA Schedule
 - Why



Lunch!!

- How is it going?
- Can we make it better?



Walkie-Talkies

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PaKtplesS4U>

- Be prepared
- Identify yourself and the recipient of your message
- Be patient
- Use short, clear and concise messages
- Pause before speaking
- Know building protocol on using student names/initials
- Do not share confidential information
- Turn walkie down when in classrooms



Point Sheets

- Make sure you're doing them as the day progresses
 - Don't try and do it at the end of the day
- Know goal(s) you are monitoring
- Note events, leave emotion out



Exit Slip:

What do you want us to know?

Appendix B

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

"It's not differences that divide us. It's our judgement about each other that do."

Willing To Be Disturbed Article

10/23/19

Behavior Interventionist and Courtney Foster

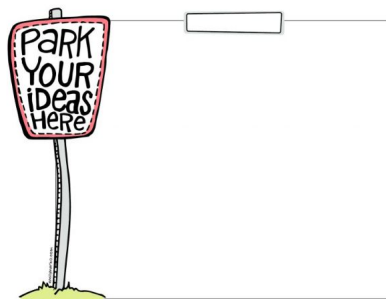
NORMS

- Team based decision making
- Focus on student equity and access
- Remain thoughtfully engaged
- Allow for individual participation, focusing on the same end goal
- Start and end times are observed and respected
- Active listening for the sole purpose to understand

AGENDA

- Announcements (5 min)
- Parking Lot (5 min)
- Celebrations (10 minutes)
- Roles/Responsibilities (60 min)

PARKING LOT



CELEBRATIONS!



ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES

Roles and Responsibilities

(To view this document please see Appendix C)

Appendix C

Roles & Responsibilities

General Education Teacher	Special Education Teacher	Special Education Assistant
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create, modify, and/or accommodate assignments and assessments based off of IEP • Provide content-specific, grade-level instruction for all students • Create data-based interventions to meet all learner needs • Assess students on content-specific skills • Progress monitor student interventions • Corresponds and meets with family members in collaboration with special education teacher • Communicate with associates on expectations in the room • Administers standardized, diagnostic assessments • Attends appropriate in-service and professional development opportunities • Complete Behavior Rubrics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops, implements, and manages IEP's with the IEP team • Progress monitor students on their IEP goals • Provide support with ideas for modifications and/or accommodations • Collaborate with general education teachers to support modifications and/or accommodations • Collaborate with general education teachers about student progress or need(s) • Inform general education teachers of student specific plans • Assist with strategies to support student academic/behavior plan • Provides SDI instruction • Initiates, conducts and facilitates conferences concerning individual students • Facilitates the inclusion of students with disabilities to general education • Administers standardized, diagnostic assessments • Attends appropriate in-service and professional development opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen and follow the directions given by classroom teacher • Provide follow-up instructions and reteaching of content already taught by teacher when directed • Assist with Chromebook login and help students navigate • Prompt the student(s) when working on assignments given by teacher • Use positive reinforcement • Communicate with nurse when the student(s) need medical attention • Communicate and give subjective information/feedback about student progress to special education/classroom teacher • Provide accommodations • Follow individual student's IEP/BIP • Ensure individual schedule is updated • Update individual sub binder as needed • Attends appropriate in-service and professional development opportunities • Facilitates the inclusion of students with disabilities to general education • Provides Health Services; including the documentation of Medicaid • Complete Integrity Checklist (weekly)

Non Examples of Educational Associate Roles/Responsibilities

- Create work for student during class that was not directed by teacher
- Make accommodation decisions outside of a student's IEP (ie. reduce test options from 4 choice options to 2 choices)
- Clerical work for the teacher(s)
- Act as disciplinarian
- Changing personal schedule
- Teach completely new concepts/skills or SDI instruction
- Administer standardized, diagnostic assessments

Educational Professional Norms

We Do:	We Do Not:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care about others • Believe kids would if they could • Come to work consistently and on time • Communicate concerns respectfully and with the appropriate people • Focus on student first • Remain in the assigned location and with students at all times • Take lunch at scheduled times • Have Growth Mindset • Believe behavior is communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gossip or complain about others • Leave students unsupervised • Use our cell phones • Share confidential or educational decision making practices with individuals who do not privy to the information • Remain stuck in a Fixed Mindset

Appendix D

Professional Development

12/18/19

Courtney Foster

Norms

- Team based decision making
 - Focus on student equity and access
 - Remain thoughtfully engaged
 - Allow for individual participation, focusing on the same end goal
 - Start and end times are observed and respected
 - Active listening for the sole purpose to understand
-

Agenda

- Announcements (5 minutes)
 - Celebrations (5 minutes)
 - Behavior Momentum (30 minutes)
 - Behavior Specific Praise (30 minutes)
 - Wait Time (30 minutes)
-

Celebrations!



Behavior Management Technique #1

Behavior Momentum

- Outcome: To be able to implement Behavior Momentum strategy.
 - Why: To increase compliant behaviors.
-

Behavior Momentum-Overview

- A strategy that can be used in order increases compliant behavior.
- Use before a non-preferred activity.
- Reduces frustration levels
- Students reinforced for easy behaviors
- Increases likelihood they will do non-preferred activity

Source: <https://www.unl.edu/asdnetwork/virtual-strategies/behavior-momentum>

Behavior Momentum-How to Use

1. Identify non-preferred activities
2. Identify easier task/requests students will complete
3. Do 3-5 tasks quickly just before to giving non-preferred activity
4. Give verbal or gestural praise
5. Give non-preferred activity within 5 seconds of last easier task

Source: <https://www.unl.edu/asdnetwork/virtual-strategies/behavior-momentum>

Behavior Momentum-Examples

- Ask student to:
 - touch top of head, nose, belly, and then non-preferred tasks
 - read 3-5 easier words before more harder words
 - Complete easier math problems before more difficult problems
-

Behavior Momentum-Video

<https://www.unl.edu/asdnetwork/virtual-strategies/behavior-momentum>

Behavior Momentum-Model

Scenario: Miranda is expected to begin her writing intervention. She avoids starting it by asking to get a drink and beginning off topic conversations.

Behavior Momentum-Scenarios

Scenario 1: Suzy is a 1st grader who is a perfectionist. She is asked to draw a character. The image is on the board for her to copy. She begins to cry and not want to do it. How will you use behavior momentum?

Discuss in groups and role play.

Discuss as whole group.

Scenario 2: John is a Kindergartner who avoids work. He is expected to pinch close pins as his writing warm-up. When you prompt work first, then legos he begins to wander around the room. When given choices he says no. How will you use behavior momentum?

Discuss and role play.

Discuss as whole group.

Behavior Momentum-Scenarios

Scenario 3: Mohammed is a 4th grade student. He is supposed to begin filling out a graphic organizer for his narrative. He throws his paper on the floor and puts his head down on the desk. How will you use behavior momentum?

Discuss and role play.

Discuss as whole group.

Scenario 4: Rosa is a 5th grade student. She was successful in completing the work during the math lesson. She is now expected to complete her math and begins to verbally refuse. How will you use behavior momentum?

Discuss and role play.

Discuss as whole group.

Questions?

Behavior Momentum-Summary

- Begin by asking them to do what they are more likely to do.
 - Build up the momentum by giving students easy tasks before asking them with non-preferred activities.
-

Behavior Management Technique #2

Behavior Specific Praise

- Outcome: To be able to implement the Behavior Specific Praise strategy.
 - Why: To increase student on-task behavior and compliance.
-

Behavior Specific Praise - Overview

- A strategy that can be used to increase student on-task behavior and compliance.
 - Recognizes a desired or correct behavior.
 - Can be verbal or written.
 - To be effective, the student must enjoy the attention or be motivated by attention.
-

Source: https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/wp-content/uploads/pdf_case_studies/ics_encappbeh.pdf

Behavior Specific Praise - Tips

- Be nonjudgmental.
 - Praise the student's accomplishment or behavior, not his or her achievement when compared with that of others.
- Be specific and include detail.
 - Avoid global positive statements.
- Be sincere and credible.
 - Use statements that underscore the student's actual efforts and accomplishments. Make sure your voice and body language match the content of your message.

Source: https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/wp-content/uploads/pdf_case_studies/ics_encappbeh.pdf

Behavior Specific Praise-How to Use

1. Deliver immediate praise in close proximity to the student for whom the praise is intended. Move around the classroom frequently so you can be prepared to "catch them being good."
2. Utilize a variety of verbal and written praise.
3. Offer praise to several students at the same time. Or provide praise privately to avoid the embarrassment some students feel when being singled out in public.

Source: https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/wp-content/uploads/pdf_case_studies/ics_encappbeh.pdf

Behavior Specific Praise-How to Use

4. Evaluate and Adjust Praise

- a. Take time to evaluate whether your praise is working.
 - i. Ask yourself:
 - 1. Is the praise effective? Do the students seem to like the attention?
 - 2. Do they maintain or improve the praised behavior?
 - 3. Do I offer each student some form of praise every day?
 - 4. Do I maintain a positive balance of positive and negative statements in my classroom?
 - 5. Do I include variety in my use of praise?
 - b. Revise the type, delivery, or frequency of praise as needed based upon individual student responses or needs.
 - c. Use frequent praise when new behavior and skills are taught. As the skill is mastered, this frequency should be gradually reduced to a more intermittent schedule.

Source: https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/wp-content/uploads/pdf_case_studies/ics_encappbeh.pdf

Behavior Specific Praise-Video



Behavior Specific Praise-Example

<https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/mcontent/fss/behavior-specific-praise-elementary/>

- Be non-judgemental.
 - Example: "Doug, you really did a great job of being prepared for class today by bringing your pencils and notebook. That is very responsible."
 - Nonexample: "Doug, I'm glad you brought your supplies today like everyone else."
- Be specific and include detail.
 - Example: "Wow, Keesha! You used several vivid terms in your paragraph to describe the story setting. Your use of adjectives has really increased."
 - Nonexample: "Wow, Keesha! Great writing today!"
- Be sincere and credible.
 - Example: "Hector, you set up the multiplication problem correctly, placing all numbers in the appropriate columns. You are ready now to work on the next part of the problem."
 - Nonexample: "Hector, you really did a great job solving your multiplication problems today."

Source: https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/wp-content/uploads/pdf_case_studies/ics_encappbeh.pdf

Behavior Specific Praise-Model

Scenario: Miranda is expected to begin her writing intervention. She avoids starting it by asking to get a drink and beginning off topic conversations.

With the use of behavior momentum, she is now working on her writing intervention.

- "Miranda, I notice that you are taking the time to put spaces in between your words and taking the time to form your letters. Good Job! That's very responsible."
-

Behavior Specific Praise - Scenarios

Scenario 1:

Suzy is a 1st grader who is a perfectionist. She is asked to draw a character. The image is on the board for her to copy. She begins to cry and not want to do it.

With the use of behavior momentum, Suzy is now drawing her character. Give an example of what you would say for behavior specific praise?

Discuss in groups and role play.

Discuss as a whole group.

Scenario 2:

John is a Kindergartner who avoids work. He is expected to pinch clothespins as his writing warm-up. When you prompt work first, then legos he begins to wander around the room. When given choices he says no.

With the use of behavior momentum, John is now pinching clothespins for his writing warm-up. Give an example of what you would say for behavior specific praise?

Discuss in groups and role play.

Discuss as a whole group.

Behavior Specific Praise - Scenarios

Scenario 3:

Mohammed is a 4th grade student. He is supposed to begin filling out a graphic organizer for his narrative. He throws his paper on the floor and puts his head down on the desk.

With the use of behavior momentum, Mohammed is now filling out his graphic organizer. Give an example of what you would say for behavior specific praise?

Discuss in groups and role play.

Discuss as whole group.

Scenario 4:

Rosa is a 5th grade student. She was successful in completing the work during the math lesson. She is now expected to complete her math and begins to verbally refuse.

With the use of behavior momentum, Rosa is now completing her math work. Give an example of what you would say for behavior specific praise?

Discuss in groups and role play.

Discuss as a whole group.

Questions?

Behavior Specific Praise - Summary

- Be nonjudgmental, specific and include detail, sincere and credible.
 - Try to tie school expectations into the praise.
-

Behavior Management Technique #3

Wait Time

Objective: To be able to consistently wait 5-15 seconds after asking a question or stating a request.

Why? To give students time to think/process

Wait Time-Overview

- The amount of time a teacher pauses before asking a question or making a request

OR

- The amount of time between a student's response and the teacher's reacting, asking another question, or making another request

Source:

<https://mc.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/wp-content/uploads/misc-media/fcc/pdfs/2019/fcc-wait-time.pdf>

Wait Time-How to Use

- Ask a question/ Make a request/ Give a direction
 - Wait 5-15 (or longer) seconds
-

Wait Time- Example

- <https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/mcontent/fss/wait-time-elementary/>
-

Wait Time- Model

- Question- What are the school expectations?
 - Request/Direction - Please take your backpack to your cubbie.
-

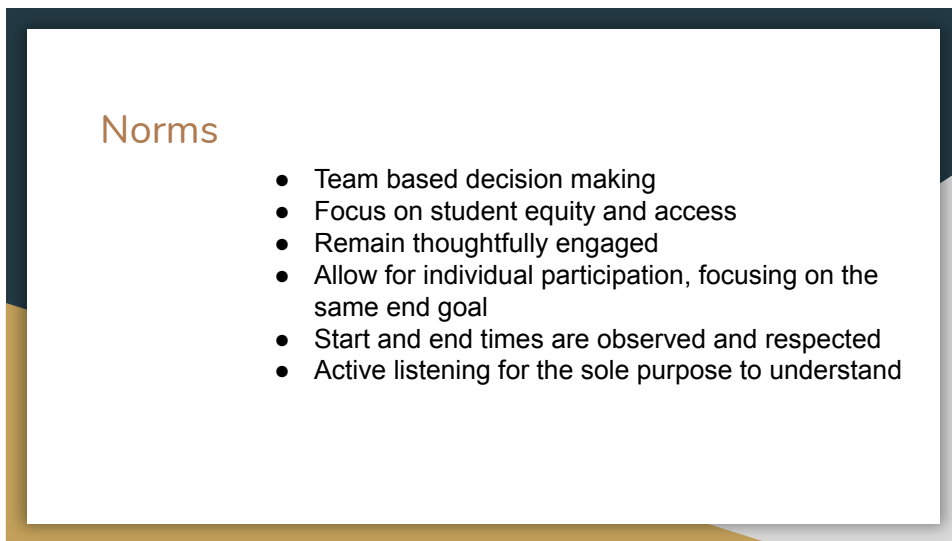
Wait Time-Scenarios

- What are some situations you could use this strategy?
-

Wait Time-Summary

- Wait at least 5-15 seconds after asking a question, making a request, or giving a demand.
-

Questions?

Appendix E

Agenda

- Announcements
- Ice Breaker (15 minutes)
- Review (10 minutes)
 - Behavior Momentum
 - Behavior Specific Praise
 - Wait Time
- Planned Ignoring (20 minutes)
- Precision Commands (30 minutes)

Ice Breaker

- Grab a sheet of paper and a pen.
- Draw a self-portrait (NO NAME)
- When complete put it face down on table
- We will pass out pictures
- Find the person the picture is of



Review-Behavior Momentum

- Overview
 - Increase compliant behaviors
 - Use before non-preferred tasks
 - Reduces frustration levels
 - Student is reinforced for easy behaviors/tasks
 - Increases likelihood they will do non-preferred activity
- How to Use
 - Identify non-preferred activity
 - Identify easier tasks/requests student will complete
 - Do 3-5 tasks quickly just before giving non-preferred activity
 - Give verbal gesture or praise
 - Give non-preferred activity within 5 seconds of last easier task

Source: <https://www.unl.edu/asdnetwork/virtual-strategies/behavior-momentum>

Review-Behavior Specific Praise

- Overview
 - Used to increase student on-task behavior and compliance.
 - Recognizes a desired or correct behavior.
 - Can be verbal or written.
 - To be effective, the student must enjoy the attention or be motivated by attention.
 - Be nonjudgmental, specific and include detail, sincere and credible.
 - Tie into school expectations.
- How to Use
 - Deliver immediate praise in close proximity to the student.
 - Utilize a variety of verbal and written praise.
 - Offer praise to several students at the same time or provide praise privately. (some students may feel embarrassed when singled out).
 - Evaluate and Adjust Praise
 - Take time to evaluate whether your praise is working.
 - Revise the type, delivery, or frequency of praise as needed
 - Use frequent praise when new behavior and skills are taught.

Source: https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/wp-content/uploads/pdf_case_studies/ics_encappbeh.pdf

Review-Wait Time

- Overview
 - Gives students time to think/process
 - The amount of time a teacher pauses before asking a question or making a request
- How to Use
 - Ask a question/ Make a request/ Give a direction
 - Wait 5-15 seconds (or longer)

OR

- The amount of time between a student's response and the teacher's reacting, asking another question, or making another request

Source: https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/wp-content/uploads/misc_media/fss/pdfs/2018/fss_wait_time.pdf

Behavior Management Technique #1

Planned Ignoring

Objective: To be able to implement the planned ignoring strategy

Why? To decrease disruptions and off-task behaviors

Planned Ignoring-Overview

- Reduces misbehaviors, off task students, disruptions, outbursts, etc.
- Teaches kids to seek attention in more appropriate ways.
- Decreases lost instruction time

Source: <https://www.pbisworld.com/tier-1/ignore/>

Planned Ignoring-When to Use it

- When a student is acting out, disruptive, off task, talking, exhibiting outbursts, etc.
- When a student is seeking attention in negative ways.
- Examples: talking out of turn, making noises, wandering around the room, drawing attention to themselves.

Source: <https://www.pbisworld.com/tier-1/ignore/>

Planned Ignoring-How to Use

- With students that are not posing a danger to others, you ignore behaviors without giving them any special attention.
- When the student does something positive, desired, or on task, praise them and give them attention.
- Make a point to praise others in class who are exhibiting on task and desired behaviors. Be specific.
- Find other ways to give the disruptive student attention and praise for desired behaviors

Source: <https://www.pbisworld.com/tier-1/ignore/>

Planned Ignoring- Example

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sU2akze8UJ>

Planned Ignoring- Model

- You are working with a group of students. One student puts their head down.
- How would you use planned ignoring.
 - Prompt student to sit up. Continue on teaching.

Planned Ignoring-Scenarios

- **Scenario 1:**

A 5th grade student is asked to complete his math review. He is given the assignment and he lays the desk.

How do you use planned ignoring?

- **Scenario 2:**

A Kindergarten student is coming in from recess. As he is walking to his classroom he sits in the hallway.

How do you use planned ignoring?

Planned Ignoring-Scenarios

- What are other situations you have encountered where planned ignoring was/could have been utilized?

Planned Ignoring-Summary

- Teaches kids to seek attention in more appropriate ways.
- Used when students are not posing a danger to others.
- When the student does something positive, desired, or on task, praise them and give them attention.

Questions?

Behavior Management Technique #2

First/Then Statements

Objective: To be able to state first/then statements.

Why? To increase compliance

First/Then Statements-Overview

- Increases compliance by using a preferred item/activity to get a student to do a low-preferred activity.
- Receiving the reward (Then) is contingent upon completion of the demand (First)
- First the student does something, then the student gets something.
- Stated positively

Source: <https://hes-extraordinary.com/the-premack-principle>

First/Then Statements-How to Use

- Keep statements short and easy to understand
- Attach preferred items/activities onto the statement
- Repeat if necessary, using the exact same wording
- Give student preferred item/activity immediately after completion of non-preferred activity

Source: <https://hes-extraordinary.com/the-premack-principle>

First/Then Statements- Example

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NDIsqs9DhA4>

First/Then Statements- Model

- A 5th grade student enjoys playing with legos but dislikes completing order of operation math problems.
- Possible statement:
 - First complete 3 math problems, then 5 minutes of legos.

First/Then Statements-Scenarios

- **Scenario 1:**

A 1st grade student loves Skittles and dislikes practicing writing his sight words.

What could be a possible First/Then Statement?

- **Scenario 2:**

A 4th grade student enjoys gym time but she dislikes finding the main idea of a text.

What could be a possible First/Then Statement?

First/Then Statements-Scenarios

- **Scenario 3:**

A Kindergarten student enjoys morning bins but dislikes reading his sight words.

What could be a possible First/Then Statement?

- **Scenario 4:**

A 5th grade student enjoys adult attention but she dislikes completing division problems.

What could be a possible First/Then Statement?

First/Then Statements-Summary

- Used to increase compliance
- State positively
- Keep statements short and easy to understand

Questions?